

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

|      |          |
|------|----------|
| AREA | FORM NO. |
|      | 500      |



1 Lexington  
 Address 50 Percy Road  
 Historic Name Wildacre Inn  
Albin Rufus Reed House  
 : Present psychiatric halfway house  
 Original inn

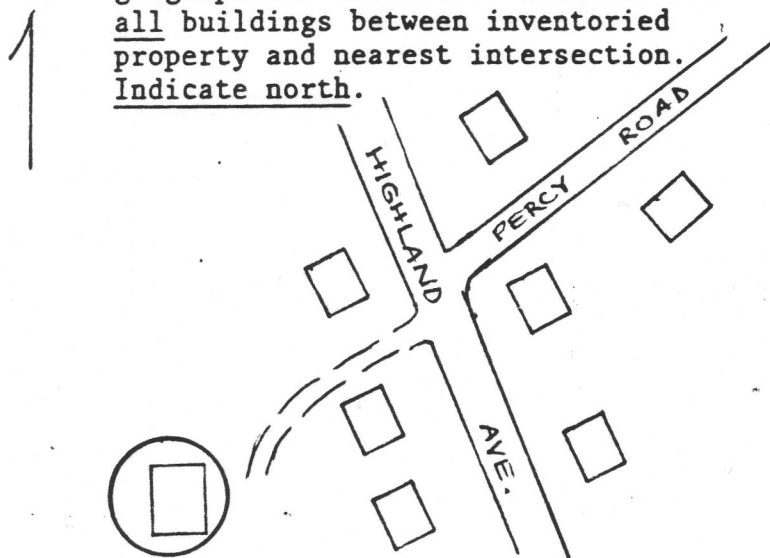
DESCRIPTION:

Year 1902

Source Worthen, p. 101

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Style \_\_\_\_\_

Architect Edward Goodwin Reed

Exterior wall fabric asbestos shingles

Outbuildings \_\_\_\_\_

Major alterations (with dates) addition to rear (date unknown)

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approx. acreage 19950 ft.<sup>2</sup>

Setting On the southwest slope of Munroe Hill; a wooded site above the wetlands to the west

Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date March, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

A house of simple exterior design with rectangular oriel window lighting the staircase and doorway with plain bracketed hood, the building's chief interest lies in the architectural elements from well-known buildings which were incorporated into the interior finishes. These include the following.

1. From the old Springfield Tavern where Washington had his headquarters: the wood panelling, the window trim and the rosettes

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

The house was built in 1902 for Albin Rufus Reed, a vocal music teacher in Boston who had resided at 45 Percy Road since 1894. Reed's son, Edward G. Reed, designed the house at a remarkably young age. Edward's sister (b. 1893) recently communicated the circumstances of its design and construction:

When Edward was young, he spent his free hours at a desk designing houses and house plans. At age 14 he designed the original Wildacre. The beauty of the interior was planned around years of collecting. Our father, Albin Rufus Reed, bought the woodwork of old Boston homes when they were torn down by wreckers to make room for new buildings. The house was written up in Boston Sunday papers in the magazine section at least twice c. 1910-1915.

Edward Reed graduated from Harvard in 1908 with a degree in architecture, having already designed another house in Lexington by that date (1 Bennington Road). He turned down a Rhodes scholarship to accept a scholarship to the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Upon return to Boston he was employed by Charles Greco, architect. He later went to Cleveland to open a branch office for Greco. After serving in World War I, Reed opened his own office in Cleveland and remained in practice there until World War II. Thereafter he practiced in Santa Maria, California. Buildings he designed include many homes in the Cleveland area; the Harvey Firestone house in Akron; the house for George Humphrey, Secretary of the

(see Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) correspondence file.

Worthen, Edwin B. A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts 1620-1946. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Savings Bank, 1946.

Twitchell, Rosamond Reed, Letter to Marcia Dane, May 9, 1984.

Benjamin, Asher, The Practice of Architecture. Boston: Published by the Author and Carter, Hendo and Co., 1833.



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town  
LEXINGTON

Property Address  
50 PERCY ROAD  
Area(s) Form No.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
|  | 500 |
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## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Several articles appearing in the *Lexington Minute-Man* in the early 1900s offer additional information on the property and its owners. The following article entitled "A Modest but Artistic Home" was published on August 16, 1902.

One is hardly prepared by the extreme simplicity and even severity of the exterior of the house, for the artistic and picturesque, as well as convenient and roomy, interior of the new home which has just been finished for the occupancy of Mr. Albin R. Reed's family, off the extension of Highland avenue, on Munroe Hill, Lexington. It is a rather remarkable house in several respects, not the least being the fact that the architect was Mr. Reed's son, Edward Goodwin by name, a lad of sixteen years and a pupil in Lexington High school. The boy has a natural aptitude for architectural design and gained his first experience in remodeling the home of his grandmother, the late Mrs. Chas. E. Goodwin (formerly of Arlington) at Kennebunkport, which the family and builders deemed a great success.

There are always limitations in building and considering these and the other difficulties which naturally follow, young Reed has put up a house which would be a credit to a matured man experienced in the profession. All the money and taste at his command was expended on the interior, which is exceptionally artistic, the latter fact owing largely to the auxiliary assistance given by the boy's father, Mr. Reed, who besides being a musician of high standing in Boston, also has a taste for the artistic and a fad for collecting valuable antiquities in the line of household furnishings.

One enters the house into a square hall, not large, but with a nicely proportioned stairway. Just out of the hall is a reception room with a French window. Turning to the left is the living room, beautifully proportioned, (28 x 16 feet), and paneled as high as the chair rail. The windows are square in shape and look out on a beautiful and extensive woodland view. A striking feature of this room is a very beautiful mantel of unusual width, in a charming proportioned colonial design. A similar mantel is in the dining room but much smaller. Out of the dining room, is a nice china closet and other convenient quarters for domestic purposes. The chambers are of good size, light and airy, and splendid closet room has been provided for all over the house.

But the charm of the house is the woodwork on the first floor, much of which was culled by Mr. Reed, Sr., from old houses which, with the unusual number of antique pieces of furniture, some of which are heirlooms of Mrs. Reed, whose family has for many years been identified with Arlington and where the homestead there on Pleasant street is now occupied by her uncle, Mr. Geo. W. Lane. Others have been collected from time to time by Mr. Reed. The woodwork including the paneling in the reception room came from a room in the famous Daggett house was planned in revolutionary days. Some in Boston, where the "tea party" episode of the other paneling was taken from the old Springfield Tavern, now torn down, where Washington made one of his memorable sojourns. The mantels and mahogany chair rails were from the well known Parkman house of tragic fame in Bowdoin Sq., Boston, of which Bulfinch, the famous architect who built the State House and other fine edifices, was the designer. The carved lintels over the doors in the hall, reception, dining and living rooms, is exceptionally ornate and beautiful in design, being patterned somewhat after the Egyptian forms and was taken, we understand, from the Ronalds house on Beacon Hill. Of course such features as these give the house a value way beyond any money estimate and makes it almost a museum and epitome of colonial days.

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Town  
LEXINGTON

Property Address  
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MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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|  | 500 |
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## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Albin Rufus Reed died on December 24, 1904 and after his death Mrs. Reed expanded the house and turned it into a boarding house. On August 5, 1905, the *Lexington Minute-man* included a detailed description of the addition and offered insight into the boarding house clientele.

“Wildacre”, the home of Mrs. A. R. Reed, in the Munroe Hill district, Lexington, has been developed into a roomy and picturesque boarding house where Mrs. Reed can accommodate a goodly family, who find in her home an atmosphere that has a charm quite original and not usually associated with the old acceptance of the word “boarding house”. An addition recently added to Wildacre affords a series of good sized rooms that have a beautiful outlook over the intervalle south and west to the hills beyond, giving the place the charm of remoteness and country life in the midst of all the conveniences and comforts of modern living. Another new feature of the house is a spacious dining room which, with the other features of the house, have been artistically designed by Mrs. Reed’s son, Mr. Edward G., a young man in Lawrence Scientific School. The wood work is green, put on the walls to give a paneled wainscot effect against a background of natural burlaps. The upper section of the walls above the plate shelf is papered with a forest paper in a tapestry effect. Some rare old pieces of mahogany furniture and blue china accent the other features of the room. The broad piazzas are a popular resort for guests these summer days, and a more charming outlook could not be found. It has been very aptly compared with the Berkshires, with its thickly wooded forestry and wide expanse of undulating country which composes itself into innumerable pictures. Among those at present staying at Wildacre are Miss Caroline Rimmer, Mrs. Durham and Miss Durham, of Belmont; Miss Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. Hardy G. Garrett, Mrs. Smithwick and children, of Boston; Mrs. L.R. Pillsbury, of Somerville; Miss Hayden of Long Island; Mr. Page, of Brookline. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Lloyd Garrison and Miss Agnes Garrison, who have been taking their meals at Wildacre since their return from Osterville, have now gone to Brookline, Me., for August. Mrs. Reed, who has shown no little courage in moulding her affairs to meet life’s vicissitudes, was Miss Anna Goodwin of Arlington, whose family was a prominent one in that town and widely known both on her father’s and mother’s side.

Directories indicate that Annie Reed continued to operate the Wildacre Inn until about 1922 when she moved to California. Her son, Edward, was also in residence and maintained an architectural practice at 8 Beacon Street in Boston. By 1924 George McAlpine was the owner of the property and proprietor of the inn. Mrs. Daisy McAlpine was still living here in 1942.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Lexington Directories, various dates.  
*Lexington Minute-Man*, August 16, 1902; August 5, 1905.  
Middlesex County Register of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Supplement prepared by:  
Lisa Mausolf  
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